Paragraph on EAC Functions for TS-EAS meeting 2 August 2019
Version 21 July 2018

Introduction
In the May 2019 meeting of TS-EAS we decided to add a discussion to the August meeting, to discuss the steps that need te be taken to develop a fully documented first version of a Functions schema and reach out to practitioners to start testing work on on the use of function descriptions. In the work for the EAC-F team of TS-EAS for 2016-2017, one of the activities was to assemble arguments on why development of a separate schema for functions would (or would not) be warranted. The exerpt of the most relevant arguments as submitted for the May meeting is again added to this paragraph. Also added are the Toronto Tenets, in a slightly edited version as submitted in May (see question 3 below).

Existing Beta schemas for Functions
There are four existing Beta versions of XML-schemas for Funtions that we know of: France, Italy, Sweden and Switzerland. You will find all four of them in this Dropbox folder: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/xxgtddca3a1plfo/AADqrmhp9SsFhju2HGh92DxGa?dl=0
These are the Beta versions as discussed in the Ad hoc working group on Functions, on 22 November 2013 in Brussels. The French Beta schema from 2012 provides the most logical starting point for further development of an EAC-Functions schema. The Ad hoc working group compiled a document of examples of function descriptions. You can find a link to this document along with examples of existing functions vocabularies on the EAC-F wiki on the TS-EAS Github repository: https://github.com/SAA-SDT/EAC-F/wiki The Vermont Functional Classification System and the Manitoba Archival Information Network provide examples in English.

Questions for discussion in the August meeting
We propose to discuss the following questions, during the TS-EAS meeting in August:

1. What needs to be done, taking the French beta Schema as a starting point, to create a fully documented and usable EAC-schema for functions? Who can we contact for the following:
    a. Development of the schema
    b. Development of a tag library and documentation
    c. Testing and feedback on the schema, tag library and documentation
    d. Buiding on a schema with source material and applications
2. It would be effective to follow the development of the new version of EAC-CPF, as far as maintenance area of the schema and interoprability are concerned. How can we ensure that this relationship is optimised in the development process?
3. If we would apply the Toronto Tenets (principles and criteria) to the development and maintenance of a Functions schema, which principles would be relevant specifically for Functions and how do we need to take them into account?
4. Which related developments (RiC and others) do we need to consider during the development of an EAC-Functions schema?[1]
5. In ISDF and other sources pertaining to the subject of functions, functions are almost exclusively related to corporate bodies. Is this exclusivity really warranted for an EAC-Functions schema (working title), or do we need to extend functions to be also applicable to persons and families? (Or do we need to push this discussion into the future?)

[1] In the revised 2019 version of Records in Contexts - Conceprual Model (RiC-CM) an attempt is made to solve this discussion by replacing the 'hierarchy' of: "Function (abstract)" / "Function" / ["Occupation"/"Position"/"Mandate"] / "Activity"; with: "Activity" / "Purpose" / "Process" / "Action".

Ad question 1. Possible source material contacts

The Functions subteam has had contacts with the following people in the past few years, or contact with them has been suggested:

Institution	People	Contact	Reason
Johns Hopkins University	Jordon Steele	Joost, September 2018	Reuse of the Johns Hopkins functions vocaubary as source material
State of Vermont	Tanya Marshall	Kathy, 2019	Use examples from VCLAS as source material
National Archives of the Netherlands	Tim de Haan	Joost and Wim, November 2017	Adding Functions as context element in Actor's Registry
DocDirekt and National Archives of the Netherlands	Aike van der Ploeg; Tim de Haan	Joost and Wim, November 2017	Using Bank of Activities database content (retention schedules) as source material
Association of provinces in the Netherlands	Erik Baas	Joost, May 2018	Reuse of the Provisa database content as source material
University of Virginia / EGAD	Daniel Pitti	Joost, October 2018	Establishing relation between development of RiC (Activities) and XML-schema Functions
SAA Records Management Section	t.b.d.		Establishing relation between RM-Section work on business processes and XML-schema Functions
Romanian National Archive	Bogdan-Florin Popovici		Suggested by Daniel Pitti, October 2018

Ad question 3. Arguments from an EAC-schema perespective: Toronto Tenets

The Toronto Tenets of 2001 describe the "principles and criteria for designing, developing, and maintaining a representational scheme and communication structure for archival context information" (SAA Glossary). Though developed specifically to support a schema for describing corporate bodies, persons, and families, these tenets can also be used to support a schema for the functions/activities performed by agents which lead to the creation and use of records. The authors of the tenets recognized: *"the existence of other information, such as functions and business processes, geographic places, events, concepts, and topics that are crucial to archival description,"*[2] but which were not addressed in the model being designed at the time. Below are the Toronto Tenets, slightly edited:

Definitions and Uses

1. Archival context information consists of information describing the circumstances under which records (defined broadly here to include personal papers and records of organizations) have been created and used.
2. Context information is not metadata that describes other information resources, but information that describes entities that are part of the environment in which information resources (i.e., records) have existed.
3. The recording of context information in archival information systems directly supports a more complete description and understanding of records as well as the provenance approach to retrieval of these records across time and domains.
4. Context information also can have value as an independent information resource, separate from its use in supporting the description, retrieval, and interpretation of records.
5. These models are also intended to support the exchange and sharing of context information, especially in those instances where repositories have holdings or interests that have context information in common, especially about creators or subjects of records.

[2] "Toronto Tenets: Principles and Criteria for a Model for Archival Context Information" Appendix B from the Report from Toronto Archival Context Meeting, March 2001. See: http://xml.coverpages.org/EAC-torontotenets.html (last checked 29 April 2019).

Structure and Content

6. Context information has traditionally been embedded in catalog records, finding aids, and other archival descriptive tools. These models can be used either as components of existing descriptive approaches that fully integrate contextual information into descriptive products or as an independent systems that are linked to descriptive systems and products.
7. Each instance of context information describes a single entity.
8. The models provide a framework within which the full range and depth of context information can be recorded and suggest a minimum set of elements for describing an entity, but defer recommendations for appropriate use of other elements to application guidelines developed for specific implementations.
9. The models define a universe of elements used to describe entities and the structure of interrelationships amongst those elements. These elements and structure support the discovery, navigation, and presentation of context information and the linking of that information to descriptions of records, especially those encoded according to EAD, MARC, and similar standards.
10. The models support the linking of descriptions of contextual entities to digital or other surrogate representations of those entities.

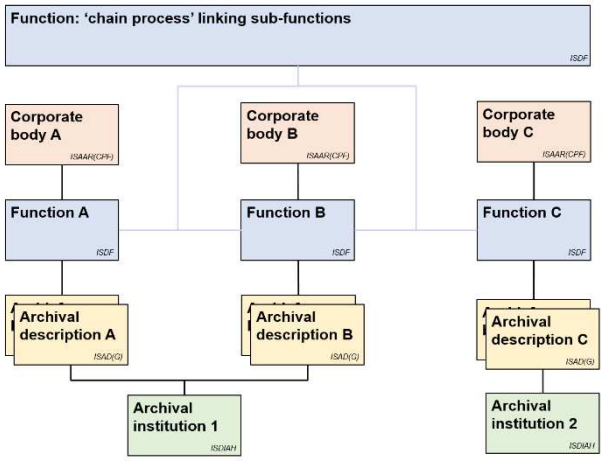
Technical Issues

11. The models are expressed as an XML-compliant document type definitions [or schemas,] to encourage platform independence and portability of information. The models may also be implemented using other approaches.

Arguments from a usage perspective: ISDF, ISO standards, information management, etc.
The following substantive arguments for development of an EAC-schema for functions were taken from the 2007 International Standard for Describing Functions (ISDF document), ISO standards for records management (15489/23081/26122/30301), file plan and information architecture models, and experience from everyday practice. They are provided here in shortened versions:

1. Functions can be more stable than their 'owners': “[While] the relationships between records and corporate bodies can fluctuate over time as the administrative or organisational structure of a corporate body changes, the relationships between records and functions [can] remain constant. An archival descriptive system which includes descriptions of functions in addition to descriptions of record creators and records will therefore provide a much richer account of the provenance.” (ISDF 2007, p. 29; see the animation ‘OrgOrgChart’ for an illustration: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mkJ-Uy5dt5g.)
2. If a system for archival description facilitates multiple relations between functions (and work processes, etc.) and archival records, then functions can be used to not only document the creation of records, but also their subsequent use in work processes: “They can help explain how and why records were created and subsequently used, the purpose or function within an organisation which the records were designed to fulfil, and how records fitted in with and related to other records produced by the same organisation.” (ISDF 2007, p. 7.)
3. If we want to describe functions, work processes, activities etc, we will need a framework that facilitates multi-hierarchical relations (as well as other types of relations). There is not always a clear cut hierarchy between functions and processes that can be modeled in a structure as is currently facilitated in EAD and EAC-CPF.
4. The notion of what a ‘function’ is can differ widely between the corporate bodies that (or persons who) create records. A separate XML schema for functions can be used to accommodate any level of description for the ‘things’ that corporate bodies do and the ‘reasons’ why they do them, keeping these descriptions flexible without forcing them onto EAD or EAC-CPF (or even RiC).

5. Functions and processes often take place independent of organisational structure or even the 'boundaries' of an organisation. Their descriptions should be able to be independent as well. This is not to say that functions or processes can exist without corporate bodies: the independence refers to the organisational structure and the organisational boundaries of an individual corporate body.
6. Functions can be used as a separate entity to link multiple corporate bodies involved in 'chain processes': functions that involve a number of actors, subsequently or in parallel (see illustration on the right). In these cases, function descriptions could be used to link the corporate bodies within the context of the chain process in which they are involved; where one corporate body might call its involvement an 'activity', while the other one might call its involvement a 'work process'.



7. Adding a distinct entity to the archival description framework for functions provides the means for giving a more flexible view of how a corporate body's goals, responsibilities, tasks and activities (and even mandates) have changed over time. For example: when did a (type of) corporate body start to perform a specific function (or work process, etc.); was there another (type of) corporate body that performed this function or a similar function beforehand; was this function defined by the same name, or was only the purpose of both functions the same and were their names and definitions different?
8. Descriptive elements taken from work process analyses in fields like records management, information architecture (e.g. process architectures), etc. can provide additional context for research in an archival environment. Classification schemes in digital recordkeeping and information management systems are typically arranged according to the work processes of a corporate body (see ISO 26122), among other methods of arrangement like subjects (pertinence) and organisational structure. The sources for these classification schemes can contain valuable contextual information for future research in an archival setting. We need a comprehensive schema to 'capture' these descriptions and their elements from 'live' information management systems for reuse in an archival context.
9. In information retrieval applications, search methods are applied using terms, related terms, synonyms etc. to retrieve documents that a researcher needs from a large data collection. Function/process/etc. names, synonyms and related terms could be used as a tool (or source) for information retrieval purposes. Considering that these names may vary between corporate bodies and even within a single corporate body, it may not be enough to apply a single classification scheme to provide all the search records (or context) that a researcher needs form a large collection. (This argument requires further research into its validity.)
10. A schema for functions could be used to develop a method for creating controlled relations between similar archives, corporate bodies, and functions/processes in different countries, cultures or languages. This would be made possible with the use of parallel forms of names (see element 5.1.3 in ISDF) and could aid research into similar functions in different countries or cultures. (This argument is quite hypothetical and would require 'proofs of concept'.)